# LISTENING TO A POLITICAL CRISIS OR POLITICAL CARTOON: INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BILL

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**Abstract** - This abstract explores the relationship between political cartoons, national branding, and social listening in the context of crises. It emphasizes the concept of social listening as a form of visual listening used by brands to analyze images that are relevant to their positioning in the market. Similarly, nations can gain insights into global perceptions, preferences, threats, and opportunities through the analysis of political cartoons. The abstract highlights the emotional and influential nature of cartoons, their ability to simplify complex situations, and the visceral reactions they can evoke. It also discusses the role of editorial cartoonists in informing, explaining, and persuading audiences. The abstract then delves into the historical context of India and its relationship with Arabs, the impact of British colonial rule, and the Hindu-Muslim divide leading up to the partition of India in 1947. It touches on the violence and dislocation caused by the partition and subsequent border conflicts. The abstract concludes with a mention of the 2019 Constitutional Amendment Act in India, which reflects the growing influence of Hindu nationalism. Overall, this abstract provides an overview of the topics covered in the paper, highlighting the significance of political cartoons in understanding national branding and the dynamics of crises

**Keywords** - Political Cartoons, Crises, Social Listening, National Branding, Visual Listening, Visual Listening, Political Crisis, Social Thinking

## I. INTRODUCTION

Whenever political cartoons and crises are discussed the implications of national branding and social listening also need to be considered. The concept of social listening can be referred to as visual listening. Brands use visual listening to analyze images that salient to their positioning in their respective market. It is important for a brand to know what their audience thinks of them and what are key influencers and audiences saying about them. For a nation, understanding political cartoons can, perhaps, identify likes, dislikes, threats and/or opportunities by the world audience. If a nation listens closely enough, a political cartoon can identify a national advocate, feedback for a crisis, or just some advice (Meehan, 2017). A national brand is "defined as the identify of a particular country as defined by an international audience" (Bigi, Plangger, Bonera, & Campbell, 2011, pp. 148-149; Anholt, 2005). A brand helps an audience create a perspective about the nation in terms of a specific issue, crisis, overall image, etc. Brand equity helps an audience to create trust or distrust and this often comes through visual images such as political cartoons. Political crisesare often represented in print media through the lens of political cartoons and memes.This paper exploresthe question "Do editorial cartoons only address situations that are already in the international arena or can they set off predicaments using the power of their own graphics?" Perhaps both, not, or either/or? Cartoons are graphic forms of communication that transmit a meaning in a nonverbal way, although words are often included as labels or captions. They depict timely events in drawings that exaggerate, minimize, satirize, or passively express the opinions of their illustrators. They are visual forms of listening.Graphics are emotional. Editorial cartoonists can impact social opinion with their drawings in a way that writers cannot because they can, in a picture, capture the significance of an incident or a movement at a specific moment or overtime. Cartoons are influential for many readers because they are easier to read, more quickly grasped and engender emotions that bond readers to the message expressed in the graphic. Of course, people who don't agree with the illustrator's point of view will also respond emotionally and negatively. Whatever the reaction, the graphic illustrator can communicate with both information and opinion and educes sentiments more impactful than mere words (Bostdorff, D. M. (1987).Political cartoons are graphic translations of specific incidents of social thinking thatcan trigger collective responses. These cartoons are created by artistswho combine the skills of artists and political analysts. These artists observe and interpret the happenings in their home societies or in the global arena, and then characterize these occurrences in cartoons or other memes. "A picture is worth a thousand words." (Barnard,1921). Pictures can make complex and complicated circumstances more accessible to readers. Political cartoonists often simplify, in a single drawing, many layers of situations that appear unexpected, volatile and unpredictable but, are in factorganic and systemic. Visuals can also image veiled and underlying details about contexts that, presented in the spoken or written word or in raw actions, might be missed or dismissed. Pictures cause visceral reactions that seize attention, emotion and understanding unlike printedtext. For this reason, cartoons are sometimes met with anger, denial, grief. Readers, at times, reject an illustration,becauseit reveals aspects of events thatno one wants to acknowledge. At other times, readers

find a portrayal of eventsas prescient and defining. Few editorial cartoonists aim to instigate crises. Because national and global audiences have a plethora of adversities to survive, cartoonists don't need to be sources of chaos to generate material. Although editorials, both print and graphic, might aggravate or arouse a crisis, most journalists write about or illustrate an extant situation. An editorial cartoonist endeavors three tasks: Inform, explain, persuade. The images created are not unbiased. A judgment is made by the cartoonist to illuminate a notable incident or attitude in a specific community, use a picture to clarify its meaning and, then, to influence others to accept his/her interpretation. Sometimes, unless the cartoonist adds a clear title exposing the meaning or explaining the intention of the illustration, the viewer may not grasp the image's significance. A responsible journalist presents what is evident and does not originate something that does not exist. However, because editorial cartoonists demonstrate their own points of view (and those of their venues), there are times when an audience may take offense at what it purports to see. Cartoons arenot created to evoke chaos or communal disorder. A responsible journalist presents what is evident and does not originate something that does not exist. However, because editorial cartoonists demonstrate their own points of view (and those of their venues), there are times when an audience may take offense at what it purports to see.

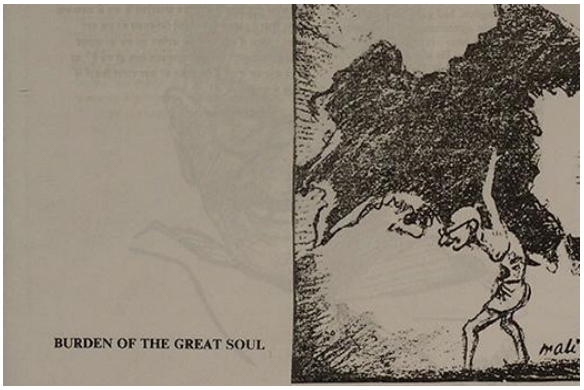
**India and the Constitutional Amendment Bill, December 11, 2019**

The relationship between Arabs and Indians is ancient, as old as the trade route between the Mideast and Asia. Before Mohammed revealed himself as Prophet and called Arabs to monotheism, Arabs and Hindus knew each other as commercial partners. The traders took the Indian numeral system to their homes, and it spread to Western Europe. Some Arabs settled in Indian coastal towns and integrated their practices with traditional Hindu traditions. Arabs brought Islam to India in the early 7th century AD. Genial and collaborative trade affiliations between Muslim Arabs and Hindu Indians continued for centuries and the Barwada Mosquein Ghogha, Gujarat, built before 630 CE, was the first religious center for Muslims in India. Two others in Bengal and Kerala were also established in the 7th century. (Islam in India, Wikipedia) Islamic life was accepted by Indians in the localities and early on, not seen as a contest between two ways of life. Over time, the two groups intermarried, traditions intermingled, and synchronic ways of life were peaceful. (Jain,1978). During the last half of the 8th century, changes in Islamic rule in the Mideast led to Arab Muslim attacks on locales on the western Indian coast, where Islamic villages and towns were established. Indians moved farther east, away from the Muslims, acknowledging that they could not challenge Islamic conquests, and aggression between Muslims and Hindus upset the earlier amicable traditions between the two groups(Jain, 1978).



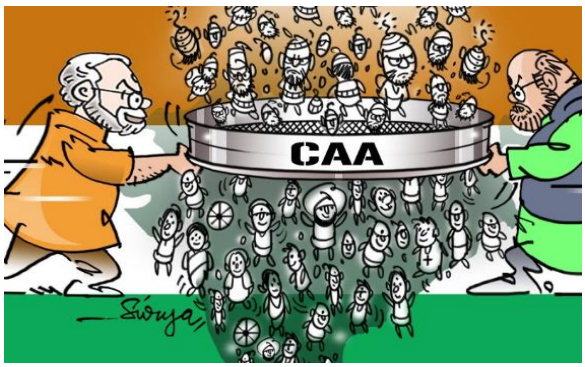

Muslim occupation on the subcontinent began in 1297 and, at the height of Muslim dominance between 1526 and 1707, nearly all the subcontinent was ruled by the Mughal Empire. Muslim reign over Indian territories gradually diminished from 1757 as the East India Company (owned by English investors) moved into the regions; Muslim rule ended with the beginning of formal British rule in 1858.The English hold on India lasted from approximately 1757 through independence in 1947. Colonial rule for 190 years infiltrated all aspects of Indian society, government, religion and traditional lifestyles. From the beginning, England was not interested in "improving" the living situations for the indigenous population; they were not drawn toward missionary goals to convert the "heathen" Indians to Christianity, although that did happen across the subcontinent; the British Raj (rule), unlike French colonization elsewhere, never considered India as an extension of the mother country. The English were there to profit from Indian resources and labor. In the image here, taken from a slideshow by Andrea Cain, Imperialism in India, we see a British colonist squeezing coins from a map of India. (Note: The cartoonist who drew this image is not identified in the slideshow or the script that accompanies it.(https://sites.google.com/site/imperialismindia/home/economic-reasons) ". . . the British are metaphorically 'milking' the raw materials out of India. They traded Indian pepper, cotton, Chinese silk, porcelain, fine spices, tea, and coffee." The text next to the picture explains the economic motives of the colonial power. India was called the "Jewel in the Crown" of the English Empire because of her vast resources. Over the course of almost 200 years, the British did introduce important innovations to the subcontinent, not to improve the quality of life for the Indians, but to increase enrichment of their power and wealth, and to enable their rule in India to run smoothly. One of the first systemic projects by the

British was building a train network in India, which was a monumental contribution to uniting peoples who lived in many regional communities across the territory. India was not a united nation-state before or during the 18th and 19th centuries.




The British did that for them. For thousands of years, the peoples of India were disparate kingdoms, caliphates, towns and villages with no central government. Each region, later called states, spoke its indigenous language—at least 15 different linguistic forms. The second permanent tool given by the British was the English language. Because the Raj extended through the entire subcontinent, peoples in all areas of India learned English, especially the upper castes and classes. These were individuals who would become the Indian government and civil service class after British rule ended. The English language then, like the train system, would unite Indian peoples. Of all the languages spoken in India, the one that allowed Indians to communicate with one another was English. The third major contribution established in India was the English system of government, law and judicial structure. These three unifying paradigms were forced upon the Indians to make possible the English administration of the colony. The unintended effect of this was the creation of a nation that called for the British to Quit India in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Running its course during the incursion of the East India Company and the subsequent rule of the British government, was a growing division between Hindus and Muslims. The British colonial policy of divide and rule aggravated tension between the two groups, highlighted by the division of Bengal into Hindu and Muslim districts. "The colonial project of 'divide et impera' (divide and rule) fomented religious antagonisms to facilitate continued imperial rule and reached its tragic culmination in 1947 (Jain,1978). During the Quit India movement started by Mahatma Gandhi with the Dandi March in 1930, both Hindus and Muslims cooperated to end British rule, but did so as two distinct groups, Indian National Congress, led by Jawarhalal Nehru and the Muslim League, led by Mohammed al Jinnah. The struggle for independence was, in Gandhi's plan, one of nonviolence and civil disobedience. In the cartoon shown by T. R. Mahalingam,
https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=AwrCwPRkvWrj33sAIw0PxQt.;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9AzEEdnRpZANMT0NVSTA4M18xBHN1YwNzw--?p-burden+of+The+great+soul+image+cartoon&type=Y23_F163_212979_070121&hsimp=yhs001#id=1&iurl=http%3A%2F%Fgandhi.gov.in%2Fimage%2Fcartoon%F35.jpg&action=clic

a pre-independence era political cartoonist in Tamil Nadu Gandhi, (Mahatma is from Sanskrit and means "great soul.") the frail-looking leader of the nonviolent Quit India movement, is pictured as bearing the whole of India on his back. The Mahatma was viewed by many as a fool for believing that the movement could win independence for India using only civil disobedience and nonviolence as methods. Millions, however, connected with the ancient Hindu traditions in which Gandhi rooted his struggle and followed the "great soul." The Muslim League grew in stature as truly representative of Muslim Indians and, from the beginning of Quit India to independence in 1947, both the British and the League support increased for the partition of India into two states, a Muslim Pakistan and a Hindu India. Although not part of Gandhi's agency, Pakistani independence was declared on Aug. 14, 1947 with Partition of India and Indian independence from British rule on Aug. 15, 1947. The Constitution of Indian guaranteed that the new state was secular, preferring no religion over another. It also protected the right of citizens to practice the religion of their choice.The Partition meant that millions of Hindus living in the area that is now the state of Pakistan, and millions of Muslims living in India were forced to migrate from one state to the other. This movement was monumental in scale. Fifteen million Indians were displaced and were forced to move either to India or Pakistan. The barbaric attacks from both groups on each other led to over 1 million deaths. The dislocation and carnage created a hateful legacy that escalated hostility in an ancient relationship that began with coexistence, included a long period of Islamic rule in India and ended with lasting distrust, sectorial hatred, and discrimination against Muslims in India.



Border conflicts between Pakistan and India and internal enmity between the Indian Muslims and Indian Hindus after 1947 contrasted with genuine efforts by millions of Hindus and Muslims to coexist. Generally, though, the animosity between the two simmered. In 1992, a mosque incident in the city of Ayodhya, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, ignited violence between members of the two sects. Babri Masjid, built in 528–29, was attacked and destroyed by Hindu nationalists and activists, Karsevaks. They believed that, before the mosque, a temple at the birthplace of their god, Rama, occupied the site. The Karsevaks gathered for a rally called by the very conservative, Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Nationwide agitation and calls for the removal of the mosque led to the Karsevaks assault on the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992. When Narendra Modi, BPJ, won his first election for became Prime Minister of India in 2014, he brought with him a powerful aspiration for a Hindu nationalist state. Besides an increase in claims of forced conversion to Islam and the history between the two major religious groups in India, the nation was not immune to influence by international nationalist movements like Make America Great Again (MAGA) and Brexit. Right wing crusades, nationalism and separatist factions have grown in India, so when Prime Minister Modi and his Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah (also President of the BJP) won majority in the 2019 Lok Sabha (The Lok Sabha, or House of the People, is the lower house of India's bicameral Parliament.), their ambition to make the nation a Hindu state seemed possible. With BJP majority support in Parliament, the Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) was ratified on December 12, 2019.

(Cartoon:https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=AwrCxnaeBXNjfSIAGUoPxQt.;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZANMT0NVSTA4Ml8xBHNlYwNzYw--?p=henrique+souza+political+cartoons+images&ei=UTF8&type=Y23_F163_212979_070121&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=trp&fr=yhs-trp-001#id=86&iurl=http%3A%2F%2F1.bp.blogspot.com%2F_ZomMCJmYrWY%2FSft-7eIucjI%2FAAAAAAAAAOI%2F0JxR_wF--cc%2Fs320%2F%2C2.bmp&action=close).

The law eases accessibility to citizenship for persecuted minorities in 3 countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These Muslim majority nations were said to persecute members of the Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist and Parsi religions. Because the countries border India, many adherents of these faiths slipped across the border as illegal immigrants and needed to fulfill the Indian Constitutional requirement of 11 years residency for citizenship. The CAA reduces the residency requirement to 5 years. Activists who oppose this law, and there are millions who do so, claim that this policy violates the Constitutional principles of a secular state and equal treatment under the law for all religions. Muslims are noticeably absent from the list of religions, and Prime Minister Modi explains that Muslims are not minorities in those nations.




Those who contest the CAA also state that Muslims are a persecuted minority in India, with inadequate representation, poorer than other minorities and more marginalized in the Hindu-dominated country (Kakkar&Jhalak 2020). In addition, the ACC is identified as a precursor to the National Registry of Citizens (NRC), already implemented in Assam in the 1950s and discussed and planned for employment in the rest of India in Apr. 2020. The cartoon above, by editorial cartoonist Yusef Munna (https://www.balrampursamachar.com) founder of Cartoon Mirror website and currently working at Sub Editor Kanti weekly, New Delhi, dramatically defines the fears of Indian Muslims resulting from the CAA. An Indian Muslim tweeted this about the CAA, "(it) is nothing but Nuremberg Laws for Indian Muslims. We will fight against these Nazis and will never accept this bill… We will fight against these Nazis and will never accept this bill."In addition, the ACC is identified as a precursor to the National Registry of Citizens (NRC), already implemented in Assam in the 1950s and discussed and planned for employment in the rest of India in Apr. 2020. In the cartoon below, Carl Latuff, internationally famous editorial cartoonist (see Political Crisis and the Presidency in Brazil, 2010-2016, p. 00) shows Gandhi, an architect of Indian independence and advocate of an India where Muslims and Hindus lived together, reprimanding Prime Minister Modi for promoting the CAA and NRC. This image represents the sentiments of many citizens and political groups. Gandhi, who was small in stature as is Modi, is shown towering over the Prime Minister, representing the cartoonist's viewpoint that the new citizenship law was, indeed, a violation of Indian constitutional principles. The proposed nationwide NRC, which till now remains just a proposal, if implemented will target illegal immigrants in India.




This essentially means if a nationwide NRC comes in as proposed, any illegal immigrant from nations other than Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, But Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhist, Jains and Parsis coming from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh won't be affected, if they claim they have arrived in India after fleeing religious persecution. Moreover, many also fear that Indian Muslims may be deemed illegal immigrants if they are unable to furnish adequate proof of citizenship as they are not included in the Citizenship Amendment Act. (India Today Web Desk, New Delhi, December 18, 2019)Protests broke out in all states after the CAA was passed. University students led demonstrations and were joined by both Muslims and Hindus. Hundreds of thousands would gather against the "unconstitutional" law, shops and homes were burned, and police and soldiers met protestors with batons, tear gas and arrests. As of September 2020, many states refused to implement the CAA and the Supreme Court is consideringthe legality of the law (https://i.redd.it/9jnox6gov1d41.jpg).

## II. CONCLUSION

The Indians have been fighting the British, their own regimes and now this citizenship constitutional amendment. Political cartoons suggest citizens are fighting against the Indian government. What is the reality? What caused the crisis; the cartoon or the amendment? Are international citizens listening? Is India's branding enough? Is the world listening? How is India imaged today? Is this a political crisis or are these just political cartoons?

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